DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Communicable Disease Control

Brucellosis

(undulant fever, Bang=s disease)

What is brucellosis?

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease caused by *Brucell abortus, B. Melitensis, B. Suis and B. Canis* that may affect various organs of the body. There are fewer than 120 new cases reported annually in the USA and one case is reported in Montana every 4 or 5 years.

Who gets brucellosis?

Everyone is susceptible to the bacteria and may get the disease if exposed. In the USA it is more likely to be an occupational associated disease of persons who work with infected animal.

How is brucellosis spread?

If breaks in the skin are present, contact with tissues, vaginal discharges, aborted fetuses and placentas of infected animals can result in infection. Ingestion of unpasteurized milk and dairy products from infected animals may also result in infection. A small number of cases result from accidental self-inoculation with animal vaccines.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

Symptoms of brucellosis include intermittent or irregular fever of variable duration, headache, weakness, profuse sweating, chills, weight loss and generalized aching. The disease may last for several days, months, or occasionally for a year or more, if not adequately treated.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The time period is highly variable, but symptoms usually appear within five to 60 days. Some persons infected years ago will have continuing symptoms.

Does past infection with brucellosis make a person immune?

It is not know if past infection with Brucellosis can make a person immune.

What is the treatment for brucellosis?

Early diagnosis leading to prompt treatment is essential to prevent chronic infection. Specific antibiotics which require a physicians prescription are used to treat brucellosis.

What can be done to prevent the spread of brucellosis?

The use of pasteurized milk and prevention of contact with infected game, sheep or goats will reduce the risk of infection. Workers who come in contact with carcasses, aborted fetuses, organs or body fluids or potentially infected cattle, swine, dogs, coyotes or elk should wear protective clothing and practice good hygiene. Herds of cattle and swine can be tested for infection.